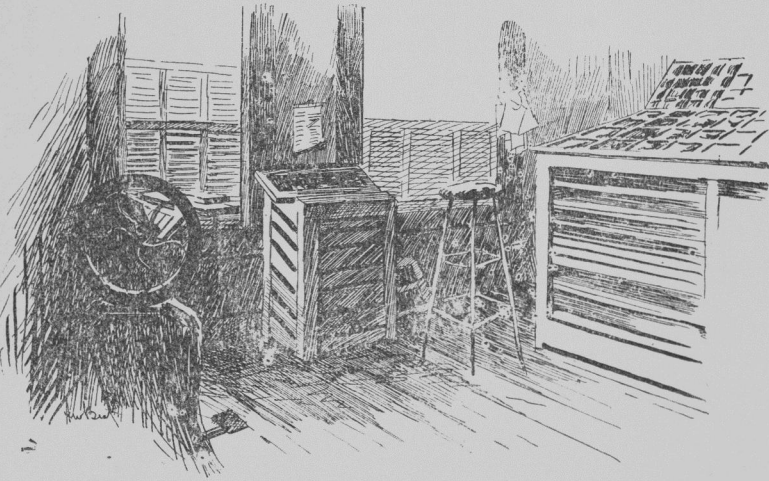


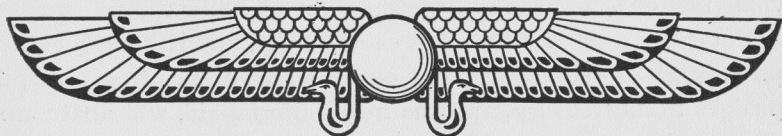


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"Point out the 'Way'—However dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness."



MERCURY.

EDITORIAL + STAFF:

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+ Edith Sears, Mary Weeks, Burnett.

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A SALUTATORY.

THE third year in a child's life is usually a critical one. This may be so with a magazine. It has survived the excitements, the perils, the rawnesses of birth and early infancy, and now stretches forth into a somewhat larger environment, perceives more and is expected to have learned no little, is subjected to criticisms, demands, standards which would have been unfitting heretofore. To the half-curious, half-generous welcome of first appearance and primary struggles, has succeeded the calm question of whether it is fulfilling its promise and whether it is likely to endure.

As to MERCURY, all American F. T. S. understand the peculiar difficulties in its management and maintenance. With very few subscribers and hardly any contributors, only a fraction of its editor's time being available and that quite inadequate for its efficient conduct, almost without assistants, or funds, or resources, or encouragements, it has yet been entrusted with one important function in the task of preserving alive the American Section, and has conscientiously wrestled against all the forces which might well have killed it. That it has been weak, far less vigorous and invigorating than the times demand and its mission exacts, may be fully admitted without shame, without even a pain from consciousness of

unmade effort. For all has been done that under the conditions could be done, and "Ability is the limit of Obligation."

But MERCURY has now larger resources, and is bound both to promise and to supply a better outcome. The printing-press, the pledges to its treasury, and the new editorial aid, will abate anxiety as to its support, and will strengthen the reasons why it should be supported. Every one can see that the section needs its own organ and cannot thoroughly do its work without that. If we are to build—to rebuild, rather—a strong T. S. fabric in America, we must have our local magazine to inform, and edify, and inspirit our membership. There must be facts, and news, and teachings, and stimulus.

And it is equally certain that the contents must be of worthy quality. These are not times when vague rhapsody, or poetical fancy, or unintelligible phrasing, or sentimental gush, or meaningless soliloquizing, or pretentious utterance, or thin platitude, or feminine logic, is going to satisfy magazine readers. Besprinkling rubbish with the term "Theosophy" will not turn it into rubbish. If readers are to be made to think, they must be furnished with thought; if there is to be edification, there must be something to edify. MERCURY, like every other periodical, will have no message for (and no subscription from) the strong if it is itself feeble, and it will ever falter, and stumble, and repel, if without masculine vigor and 19th century tone.

Hence its promise of determined effort after a higher intellectual plane; but, very obviously, feebleness will be inevitable if they who are its natural supporters—American F. T. S.—do nothing to feed and maintain it. Editors and two or three friends cannot do all the thinking for the section. When an intelligent member perceives a topic inadequately handled, or encounters a fact worthy of comment, or senses a real thought tingling in his brain, let him take this as notice that Karma expects him to do something for MERCURY. If he is conscious that his mental wants are not all met, let him infer that other minds are probably in hunger too, which means that he should try to feed them, and, in so doing, be fed in return. There is very excellent authority for the passage, "He that watereth shall be watered only himself."

True, every one cannot write, but every one can point out the

subjects upon which writing would be accepted. Men and women often stumble over doctrines, or paragraphs, or reasonings which do not commend themselves. It is easy to put the difficulties in concise form and let the editor hand them over to a competent friend, or assign them to the "Questions and Answers" department. Thought is elicited by being appealed for. Those who cannot think can at least stimulate the thinkers into thinking.

And certainly almost every one can subscribe. Any one can who puts by 2 cents a week, and perhaps there is not an American F. T. S. unable to do this. If each one does so with the pledges assured MERCURY is certain of life.

This article is headed "A Salutatory." So it is. "Salutatory" means "a greeting." There is greeting from a two-year old periodical to its friends, greeting from the sectional organ to the weak but strengthening section, greeting from a Theosophical voice that Theosophy has not been killed in America, but has hope of recovery from its wounds, and of a vigorous future; and there is greeting in that he who points out a way of usefulness to his fellow does a kindness, indicates a duty, and foretells a benediction.

ALEXANDER FULLERTON.

THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE.

What is it?

The voice is that by which we attempt to express idea. Expression being always comparative materialization, we have the Indian word "Vach"—akin to voice, representing the productive materializing powers of nature. The *Voice* of the Silence is that which stands between us and silence; the effort of that silence to communicate itself to us. And what is that silence? The very word used—Silence—shows that it is that which is beyond the veil of ordinary experience. It is in direct contrast to our feverish activity. It is the other half of being. It is the Eternal place of peace.

"Shall any gazer see with mortal eyes,
Or any searcher know by mortal mind;
Veil after veil will lift—but there must be
Veil upon veil behind?"

It is that which is at the very center of our being; that which stands back of, and yet *is* our consciousness. In itself inexpressible, it is yet the source of all manifestation. It, the silent watcher, stands unaffected by the shifting scenes of life. Yet it is all, and in all. Lamentable poverty of human language! We cannot even come near to the expression of the deepest truths unless we use terms apparently inconsistent.

The Voice of the Silence is ever that, which, standing beyond our personal experience, links us to the universal; conveys to us those grand truths which, while according with human reason and experience, rest not upon these as their foundation, but reaching into the very essence of things, find there at once their source and their consummation. It links us to the Divine. It connects man with the universe.

Turning now from the title, to the book which bears its name: In the presence of Mrs. Besant it was written from memory at Fontainebleu in 1889 by H. P. B. in one sitting. "Isis Unveiled" had attracted public attention by its boldness and its versatility. The S. D. had demonstrated her wonderful knowledge and her power of gathering together the scattered facts of literature, science, and philosophy, and so grouping them that they afforded the most convincing evidence of the truth of that grand theory of the universe unfolded to some extent in those volumes. "Isis Unveiled" and "The Secret Doctrine" were directed respectively to the superficial reader and the student. Among these two classes there was a third. The few who were or became fully convinced of the existence of powers unknown to and not believed in by the average human, yet accessible to those who will to make the effort. Ignorant of the way, they desired to tread it. They were willing to give up the lesser for the greater; the pleasures of sense for the power of mind; the pride of intellect for the consciousness of wisdom. To these few this small volume is dedicated. It is derived from "The Book of the Golden Precepts," one of the works put into the hands of mystic students in the East. It is of the same series as that from which the stanzas of the book of Dzyan were taken, upon and around which the Secret Doctrine is built, and is said to have been given by the Ancient Initiates to the great Arhat Arjuna.

It is written to point out the way to those who would attain the heights of human possibilities. Its language is that of imagery. Its deeper meaning reveals itself unto us as we practice its precepts. It is a rule of life. Follow it and thou shalt become a new saviour of mankind, and like all saviours of the past the most glorious consummation of your terrestrial life shall be the renunciation of glory, and power, and bliss for the service of humanity.

We are told that he who would hear the Voice of the Silence must learn the nature of intense and perfect concentration. That is "one thing needful." Without it permanent progress cannot be made. It requires effort, will power, determination, perseverance. Its immediate result is power. By it the effectiveness of every faculty of the mind is multiplied many fold. The soul has begun to control the mind. The conquest of the great slayer has begun. This is the first step on the path which the adept must travel.

Concentration having been attained, the Voice of the Silence begins to make itself heard, and gives to the candidate rules by which he may escape many mistakes on his way towards the full realization of perfect manhood. While concentration will enable the aspiring one to ally himself to the source of power, knowledge of his relation to the external universe is necessary. The soul must lend its ear to every cry of pain. "Let each burning human tear drop on thy heart, and there remain: nor ever brush it off until the pain that caused it is removed." For "These tears, O thou of heart most merciful! these are the streams that irrigate the fields of charity immortal." Adeptship grows on the soil of divine compassion. The dual harmony must be obtained. Harmony with the within, the soul of the universe; and harmony with the without, manifested nature. It is the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man, wearing a new garb.

One of the most significant sayings of the whole book is "Help nature and work on with her," and she will show thee the means and the way, the gates and the goal. There is but one road and that is, the renunciation of every selfish thought.

The golden light of spirit from the one Master shoots its effulgent beams on the disciple from the very first, but unless the flesh is passive, head cool, the soul firm and pure, that light will

not be felt and recognized. The activity of matter—the encasement of the soul—hardens it and prevents the operation of spirit either from within or without; from without by excluding it, from within by distracting the attention and thus preventing concentration. Therefore, in the fifth stage of development the candidate is told, “Withhold thy mind from all external objects, and external sights; withhold internal images, lest on thy soul-light a dark shadow they should cast.”

Three stages are mapped out in the work: In the first the candidate is trained so that he may hear the Voice of the Silence—may attain to full spiritual illumination. In the second, having won right to bliss, two courses are presented to him: To enjoy Nirvana, or to renounce it, so that his power and wisdom may be devoted to the service of humanity. The candidate chooses that path which has been chosen by every saviour of mankind. He thirsts for that higher wisdom which can be gained only by labor in humanity. He renounces the fruit of rest and liberation, for the still sweeter fruit of long and bitter duty. For others' sake the great reward he yields. Then the teacher leaves him; henceforth he must travel the path alone. In his journey over that path every thing which has built up a barrier between him and humanity is destroyed; the whole nature is purified. The man emerges strong, triumphant, unselfish, pure, and there is more joy throughout nature's highest realms over this one soul returning to his self-imposed duty to humanity, than there is over the 99 who attain and retain Nirvanic bliss. The work, which is really the history of the evolution of a soul from Manhood to Godhood, closes with this triumphant tone, which echoes through all nature's kingdoms:—

“Behold the mellow light that floods the eastern sky. In signs of praise both heaven and earth unite. And from the fourfold manifested powers a chant of love ariseth, both from the flaming fire and flowing water, and from sweet-smelling earth and rushing wind.”

“Hark! from the deep unfathomable vortex of that golden light in which the victor bathes, all nature's wordless voice in thousand tones ariseth to proclaim:—

“Joy unto you, O men of earth.

A pilgrim hath returned back from the other shore,

A new saviour of mankind is born.

Peace to all beings.”

F. E. TITUS.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

EVERY strong adherent to any religious system naturally regards it as the panacea for all ill. When the Baptist, the Methodist, the Presbyterian is asked what he regards as the best remedy for human evil, he at once proffers his own theological outfit as that which, if universally adopted, would cure the sorrows of humanity. Hence, when the Theosophist is asked the same question and in response exhibits the truths of Theosophy, people of course say, "Oh yes, just like all the rest! Every zealot, no matter what his name, poses accordingly." Therefore if Theosophy and the Theosophical Society are to obtain any different hearing from that accorded to other systems, it must be because they occupy wholly different ground and have an outlook on human problems which is totally distinct. I myself believe that such is the case, and that the justification for the doctrines of the one and the work of the other is to be found in that very fact.

If anyone desires to understand why the Theosophical Society was founded and what is its genius, he needs to carefully inspect the exact condition of the Western world at the time of that foundation; and the three great aspects of the situation are naturally the religious, the scientific, and the social. Examining the religious aspect, we find that at the beginning of the century the various religious bodies occupied each its own position, of the correctness of which it was abundantly assured; and its active force was expended partly in exposition of its own tenets—what was known in early Christianity as "apologies," in polemics with denominational competitors, and in attempts to expand its influence into the non-religious world outside. That world had a real and sincere interest in religious problems, even in religious disputation, and it gave no small amount of attention to questions of a distinctively religious and theological character. But a very great change took place through the first three-quarters of the century in the spheres within and without the church. Outside of it there came a great modification from the intensely secular spirit of the age, a spirit which concentrated attention more and more on the purely physical matters of life, dulling interest in the supersensuous and the unseen, and inciting to a belief that time

expended on the problems of another world is time which had better be spent on the problems of this. Within the church a no less marked change occurred. Three distinct sciences arose with deep effect on the religious world,—the sciences of Comparative Theology, Comparative Mythology, and Biblical Criticism. Their effect was not merely to expand religious interest in questions of a more or less intellectual character, but—and this is far more important—to create a suspicion that all doctrines were more or less an outgrowth of conditions, not inherently true, but more a phase of belief, explicable on principles of intellectual evolution rather than methods of divine revelation. This gave an insecurity, a want of certainty, to all those articles in creeds which had hitherto seemed so impregnable. Thus without the church there was an abatement of interest in religion, and within it an abatement of security in its truth. Hence, if any improvement was to be effected, it would be on the one hand by re-awakening interest in the higher spheres of being, and, on the other hand, by copious assurance that certain truth therein was attainable.

In the scientific world there had also been great change. Enormous, almost incalculable, advance had been made in scientific investigation and discovery, but there had come about a disposition to investigate solely along physical lines, and to repudiate as either visionary or unattainable all regions outside the strictly material. This was as if one should take a human corpse and by the most minute dissection to the very last degree of each filament and particle, and by the most exhaustive chemical analysis of each bone and tissue, expect to find the principle of life, the surging wave of fancy, and passion, and emotion which had vitalized the now senseless mass. What could be more absurd than to gauge the invisible by the visible, or make the five organs of the fleshly body the limit to the attainment of all fact and truth! And yet this was virtually the position of science as it developed through the middle part of the Nineteenth Century. And here again, if there was to be a reform, a re-awakening of whole regions of thought, and interest, and perception which had now become dormant and sterile, it must be through a new principle stimulating to a different method.

In the social world so many factors of change existed that it is.

not possible now and here to cover them. Yet a few must be noticed. In the early part of this century Europe contained a few large and many petty states, the principle of nationality being to some extent developed. Partly through the assertion of the growing spirit of liberty, and partly through other causes, the century witnessed a consolidation of many of these petty principalities, so that the last quarter found Europe divided into a few great and powerful kingdoms. This naturally stimulated the sense of nationality, and one result was intense national jealousy, aggression, and rivalry, accompanied with enormous armaments and an intensely military ambition, the consequence being an isolation of each country with an antagonism to all others. Along with this went another and most potent influence. If we examine biological evolution from its lowest forms, we find that in the lowest strata of animal life the organism is not differentiated, and each particular section performs the work of all. That is to say, the stomach can digest food and yet act as a heart, the motor tendrils absorb food, and each organ is more or less independent of the others. As evolution advances, the separate organs differentiate more and more clearly, each confining itself to its own function and losing the power to function otherwise. In the highest of all organisms, that of man, this principle is carried to its extreme. The heart propels the blood through the system, but cannot in any wise digest; the brain performs the functions associated with mind, and also generates the nervous energy of the system, but has no part in the workings of the heart; the hands effect the most delicate work, but are not competent to breathing or digestion. The result of this thoroughness of differentiation is threefold. First, that each performs its own work incomparably better than did the original homogeneous organs; secondly, each organ becomes unable to do the work of any other; thirdly, each becomes dependent on all the rest, the efficiency of each and of the whole being conditioned on the most perfect unity and continuity of the system. If I clamp a ligature around my arm, my throat, or my leg, I do not merely paralyze and wither the part beyond, but I weaken the whole system by depriving it of the efficient help of one of its coherent parts.

Now the truth thus illustrated in a biological product of nature

is no less illustrated in the larger organism composed of nationalities. Nations make up one great organism, even as the parts of the body make up one organic whole, and the same truths of growth and function are exhibited in the one as in the other.

Because of peculiarities in soil and climate one nation is eminently fitted for agriculture; because of metallic deposits and for other reasons, another nation is eminently fitted for factures; still another inclines to literature, another to art, another to commerce, each one having a tendency to a special occupation and therefore an inadequacy to a different one. When the ideal prompted by nature is followed out, each nation is allowed to pursue without restriction its own special aim, and everything like check upon international relation is most carefully avoided. And yet it has come to pass throughout this century that a school of sciolists, thinking themselves wiser than nature herself, has considered that the true ideal was the reverse of that which nature had prescribed. It was their conviction, contrary to all biological analogy, that each part of the international organism should be trained to perform the functions of all other parts as well as itself; that is, that an agricultural nation should be facturing, literary, artistic, commercial, and so on. This was as if one should say that the same soil should be expected to produce fir trees, apples, pine-apples, oranges, and mangos. In order to effect this aim, careful legislative restrictions were laid on international circulation, the hope being to force each nation into producing all that its needs demanded, and to make it independent of all other nations. The inevitable result was international resentment, hatred, suspicion, and isolation; and of course each one suffered from the loss of that free interflow of product and energy which would have existed but for the stunting and paralyzing influences of the isolating policy. This very important influence is to be reckoned in considering the antagonized system of the various nationalities.

Within those nationalities a like influence was at work. Partly from erroneous systems of political economy, partly from the tendency of the age, there had come about a general conviction that the true secret of prosperity was the adversity of others, and that each man succeeded precisely in proportion as he made others to fail. Thus both national and individual policy was precisely the

reverse of that dictated by nature, and a universal and organized selfishness had come to rule in legislation and private enterprise.

And here again, if there was to be any reform in policy and life, it would have to be through a reversion to natural law, a restoration of true ideals, a rehabilitation of just principle. It was with religion, science, and society in the condition described that those great Beings who, we are taught, have the interest of humanity in their keeping, confronted the problem of life. What was to be the remedial measure taken? In accordance with their established practice, some new step in the melioration of human affairs was to be made in the beginning of the century's third quarter. Very evidently there were certain things which such a step must avoid, certain others which it must adopt.

Clearly it could not be an *old* prescription. The same result would follow the same attempt. Something different must be tried if a different result was to be expected. It could not be an elaborated creed. Such existed by the dozen, and all of them had hitherto failed to reform humanity. It could not be an establishment of a fresh ecclesiastical hierarchy. That too had been abundantly tried, and the era when it attained its fullest growth was that which has been properly named "the dark ages." It could not be the re-exploration of regions already familiar. They had failed to yield the treasure sought. It could not be by the isolated and sporadic effort of scattered individuals. Such could not hold out hope of permanent success, for all enduring effects must come through organization.

What, then, must it be? It must furnish some one truth, a truth so far-reaching as to include all departments of human activity, and so potent as to contain within itself a regenerative principle equal to the requirement. That truth must have sanction, not from a dubious revelation or a local scripture, but from the universal testimony of the highest authorities in mind, affirmed by all the disclosures of a complete, not a partial, science. It must be free from everything which would bind the free intellect of man, or which would come in conflict with the liberal spirit which had been demonstrated a political necessity and upon which all real progress is now known to be conditioned. Beyond the one potent and essential truth, nothing could be exacted in the

way of creed or ritual. It must open up regions of thought and knowledge entirely untrodden by the hemisphere it addressed, and must disclose a region of limitless research to the instinct for spiritual things. It must furnish the means to absolute *certainty* in the various departments of human knowledge, making facts in the unseen world as verifiable as those in the seen. It must provide an organization for the dissemination and conservation of the single truth which was to pervade as the regenerative power, and yet that organization must be so flexible, so undogmatic, so simple and smooth, that there should be no room for contention or wasted strength, all power being used in the single purpose for which it was established.

Such were some of the requirements for any new step which should be hopeful in correcting the evils of the time and in re-invigorating the religious and philosophical spirit of the age. With singular sagacity, as we can now see, the powers behind the movement established the Theosophical Society. They made admission to it conditional upon acceptance simply of the one truth it voiced, namely, the solidarity of humanity, the doctrine of Universal Brotherhood. It affixed no religious or other creed, allowing every man unlimited liberty in the formation of his own opinions and the practice of his own rites. It especially provided for the opening up of investigation of the whole region of Eastern religious thought, thought embodying researches and conclusions hitherto unknown to the Western world, but the rich inheritance of generations of illuminated and experienced seers. It embodied a study of all the elements in the complex structure of man, holding that a true knowledge of the human being exacted a knowledge of all the ingredients which went to compose him; and it pointed out his complete identification with the whole cosmos through the constituents of his own organization, showing, as did all other considerations, that he prospered only as he fully identified himself with it, and as he realized and practiced entire union with his brother atoms in the great body of humanity at large.

The history of the movement thus inaugurated by masters at the beginning of the fourth quarter of this century justifies the policy which I have described. The Theosophical Society has

not yet a large body; it has not an extended membership, a swollen purse, or a fashionable following. Yet the great principle which it has voiced has arrested the attention of not a few who are far removed from its immediate influence; it has brought to view forgotten truths which have been eagerly grasped by thousands of cultivated minds as soon as perceived; it has made clear to many that there exists a store-house of assured fact in every department of human interest and that such storehouse is accessible to the enquirer; it is arresting more and more the attention of the cultivated world as probably the great study of the coming century; it has disseminated a principle which is demonstrated by its influence, the fact that mankind is not necessarily a disintegrated mass, but rather an organism of connected particles; and, by the doctrines which it has demonstrated as facts and enlivened as motives, it has given a purpose, a meaning, a vitality to human life which changes the whole attitude towards existence of many who have discerned the vanity and hollowness of all ordinary earthly interests. More than this, it has extracted the bitterness from death. That departure from this world which has been to so many a lifelong terror, of whom St. Paul so truly said that "through fear of death they were all their lifetime subject to bondage," loses its character as an abnormal or a saddening experience, and assumes the aspect which belongs to all the processes of nature, the aspect of a rational, normal, progressive stage in an upward evolution. No longer the doorway to black terrors and penal intentions, death is seen the passage to peace and rest, and the whole hideous-accumulation of imaginary terrors vanishes before the light which the Theosophical Society, through its exposition of Theosophy, has thrown upon the human family. If through such exposition the society had done no more than relieve from lifelong bondage those thus terrorized, it would have conferred an incalculable service upon humanity, and would have earned the thanks of every sincere philanthropist.

But this is by no means all of its services. If you ask me what would be the outcome of an unrestricted conformity to the one principle the society embodies, I answer that it would be the abolition of almost all human ill. Of course the suspicious and hostile feeling with which most men regard their fellows would

vanish away. As all unfraternal aggression would cease, so would cease the safeguards against it and the punishment for it. Jails, and scaffolds, and policemen, and law courts would have no more function, and therefore no more existence. The sorrows which follow upon tyranny, and mis-government, and war would be obliterated. The hostility of nations and the enmity of individuals would have an end. All the sweetness and grace which belong to a harmonious and unchecked evolution would find their efflorescence in a regenerated humanity, and the social world, no longer racked by dissension and poisoned with envy, could rejoice and blossom as the rose. Do you ask whether we expect that such results can flow from a society insignificant in numbers and as yet but little known to the great world of thought? No, but the principle which that society embodies, a principle limitless in its influences, however small may be the arm which at present upholds it, *may* accomplish all these results, and at some future time *it will*.

ALEXANDER FULLERTON, F. T. S.

THE AURA OF PLANTS.

EDITOR MERCURY:—It has been my good fortune to meet a lady, a F. T. S., gifted with high psychic faculties, and especially a very vivid power of sensing supernormal colors. After studying with her the Human Aura—whereby I had the opportunity of verifying the accuracy of her sight, all her findings being in perfect accord with what the Theosophical authorities have made known on the subject through our literature—I got her interested about the auras of non-human objects, the verification of which I thought might lead to useful developments. I now send you a first batch of observations, subject to correction, but the general reliability of which I consider sufficiently established, first by the lady's correct views of human auras, and second, by the fact that, while she could not remember the details of her own observations, yet after days of interval, she would accurately repeat the description of any specimen submitted to her analysis. Fourteen kinds of plants were examined with the following results, showing that every genus, and even the different varieties of each genus have a most diversified and characteristic aura of their own :

HONEYSUCKLE, a narrow aura of about one-twelfth of an inch, composed, first of a bright line of light of the thickness of the tiniest hair, which seems to be a current flowing evenly along the edge of the leaf; above this a thread of darkish red emanation blending into a band of yellowish green; through this general aura runs a kind of border composed of exceedingly minute, narrow, linear figures, which appear to start from the rim of the leaf, perpendicularly to it, and run parallel to each other up to the outer edge of the aura, with a curve at the top; through the length of these linear figures appear horizontal streaks of light, from four to six streaks in each figure.

VIOLET leaf, about $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch, first a bright light following the indentation around the leaf, above this a string of two rows of little purplish red figures, diamond-shaped, distributed so as to form a border of 14 little scallops over each small lobe of the leaf, and above this a wave of dark blue, shading off into light blue.

PANSY, a very large aura for the size of the leaf, starting by a little rim of light around the edge, then an emanation of yellow, violet and blue, blended like prismatic colors, through which appears a confused multitude of broken and superposed linear figures.

LAMB'S-QUARTER, about $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch, first a dark blue rim, lining the edge of the leaf, then a line of red fading into a pretty orange-yellow, and afterwards into a lilac mist; in the lower colors are seen some very tiny figures like broken waves.

FEATHERFEW, a wide aura of about the quarter of the whole diameter of the leaf, first a rim of light, followed by an irregular chain of colorless, oval and triangular figures on a mist of yellowish purple, and above, a band of dark velvety purple, fading to a light lavender.

FIG leaf, a grand aura, first two broken lines of light, then innumerable dots, forming themselves into geometrical squares on a field of light purple, then towards the outer edge a line of greenish yellow light, above which a band of dark red, fading into dark pansy purple.

PEACH leaf, a very narrow and rather insignificant aura, beginning by a light line along the edge of the leaf, followed by a purple mist through which is manifest a complicated system of triangular figures impossible to describe without a drawing.

ORANGE leaf, aura nearly one inch wide, first an edge of light following the rim of the leaf, then several rows of tiny geometrical figures, lozenge-shaped, of pink magenta, from which seems to flow a clear aura of a light magenta color, fading gradually away; different trees, however, gave auras differing very materially.

ROSE leaf, every variety with a different aura; one, a moss-rose, showed a line of brilliant metallic brick-red passing into two shades of orange, the last being very faint; in this aura, all the minute indentations of the leaf are reproduced and followed by three distinct lines of light; in another variety (the Castile), the aura was a large band, half an inch wide, of bright yellow, at the basis of which existed a design of brilliant white parallel streaks, swollen at their center and inclined towards the point of the leaf, and accompanied on each side by a parallel row of brilliant dots on a field of lavender mist; another variety again, the Jacqueminot rose, offered a pretty design of interlaced "tejas" triangles, covered with brilliant dots (Tejas-Akasha).

ROSE petals, presented the poorest of the auras examined, being merely a faint reproduction of the colors of the petal, following its form and fading out into nothing, with a faint shadow of outline.

ROSE-GERANIUM leaf, a most beautiful and complicated aura of about one-tenth of an inch; first a dark thread, then a thread of colorless light, both following the indentations of the leaf, and above these a beautiful chain of lovely and perfectly regular lozenge-shaped bits of bluish-lilac undulating emanations, these lozenges being geometrically marked with an inside smaller lozenge, and a dark spot or dot in its center, all these shaded with various shades of color diminishing in intensity from the inside toward the outside; above this chain, right over the top angle of each lozenge, comes a half ellipse, composed itself of a chain of the tiniest half-elliptic dots, the whole finishing rather abruptly by a bright light.

NUTMEG-GERANIUM, first a rim of dark, brilliant, metallic blue, shading off into extremely light blue, then into a bright metallic orange, this shading out into light orange, the whole of the space of this aura being further subdivided into the geometrical border of five scallop-shaped waves, one over the other, and seemingly

reproducing on the tiniest scale the general design of the outline of the leaf.

CHRYSANthemum, a rather wide aura, the most interesting of those studied, after the two geraniums; first a silvery light around the edge of the leaf, then a band of pink lilac, in which are seen delicate tiny figures of an undulating form, putting one in mind of a double scallop of the Tejas tatwa kind, outside of which runs a band of pink lilac.

CARNATIONS, petal, a beautiful aura, one-tenth of an inch, first a bright pink light along the rim of the leaf, above this, several rows of faint pink diamonds, oblongated towards the right, with a square transparent hole or opening in the middle, on a general lavender background; above this a reddish-yellow band fading away.

CARNATION leaf, an exceedingly narrow aura, rather similar to that of the petal, beginning by a light rim, then four distinct rows of the minutest wavy greenish figures of diamonds, less regular and less angular than those of the petal, these rows being separated by a background of dark lavender, and above them, a yellowish emanation, fading into invisibility.

N. B. All these auras were observed as they flow from the edge of the leaves held perpendicularly before the observer. It would seem that the more complicated is the outside form of the leaf, the prettier, more complicated in design is the aura; it seems also that the colors disappear with life, since the auras of dead leaves consist merely of a greyish mist.

At some future date it may be possible to send you observations and comparisons on the auras of flowers and minerals.

It is of course too early to try to draw any conclusions from the above findings; yet, there seems to be a general indication that the nature of the geometrical forms, seen in nearly all the auras, follows very closely, but with innumerable variations, the laws and types mentioned by Rama-Prasad (Nature's Finer Forces), concerning the Tatwas and their combinations. Thus, in the sweet-smelling leaves of the rose-geraniums and petals of the carnations, we have a fine illustration of the predominance of the form of the *Prithivi*, or odoriferous tatwa, while in the spotted nutmeg-geranium the *teja* forms indicate the working of color, and various indications of the other tatwas appear in other plants. It

seems also probable that the different beautiful colors and shades existing in the auras of plants will be found correlative with the various properties and essential chemical components of those plants.

Thus it would appear that a vast field of study of intense interest will be found stretching before the willing observers; and it is to be hoped that the announcement of such possibilities may induce those in our society, who are duly gifted, to contribute their share to the extension of our knowledge, by undertaking similar provings and verifying those above mentioned. At any rate, these show what an endless mine of glorious forms and colours nature, in her invisible planes, displays to the view of those who are gifted with natural or trained psychic sight.

A. MARQUES, F. T. S.

THE FORUM DEPARTMENT.

Any person can send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. When necessary, the various communications will be condensed by the editor. Be careful to write only on one side of the paper.

QUESTION CCCXLVI.

Does it not seem better for F. T. S. at meetings and elsewhere to discuss the practical application of Theosophical doctrines to ourselves and our lives, rather than questions as to the action of Spirit in matter, the value of the seven plexuses, etc? Many inquirers have complained to me (with reason, I believe) that Theosophy as expounded by W. J. Colville, Prentice Mulford, and some others, is more comprehensible than that expounded in standard Theosophical works, such as "The Secret Doctrine," "Esoteric Buddhism," etc.

A. F.—If the question means simply, "Is practical Theosophy more important ethically than doctrine?" the answer must be "Yes." If it means, "Are the practical expositions by Colville and others more comprehensible than the scientific ones by Madame Blavatsky?" the answer must again be "Yes." But if it means, "Are they, therefore, on the whole more valuable, and may the scientific ones be dispensed with?" the answer is "No."

The question really raises two issues,—the relation of practical and doctrinal Theosophy, and the true policy of branches in dis-

cussing each. Now as to the first it may be said that practical obligations in any region must have their basis and source in the facts which underlie them, and that they can neither be demonstrated nor even stated until those facts are known. The duty of truthfulness, for instance, is a mere assertion, unless are exhibited both the moral law enjoining it and what is called the "sanction" enforcing the law. In Theosophy human duty may perhaps be described as making the best we can of ourselves and doing the best we can for others; but neither department is explicit or obligatory until we know the how, the whence, and the whither of life, which involves explication of divine origin, present conditions, and future destiny, these requiring statement of Karma Reincarnation, Human Solidarity, and Celestial Aids. No man can be expected to forego present gratification unless he sees reasons why he should, and the reason must be based on the facts in his nature, his surroundings, and his contemplated evolution. Hence the necessity for very ample unfoldment of fundamental truth in Cosmogony, Authropology, and Teleology. Theosophy is a science and the Theosophic life is founded on that science.

Naturally, however, most men do not need profound scientific knowledge as a requisite to right life. Very little perception of the basis of morals and religion, with a good deal of interest in them and purpose to practice them, is the real need; but for the few who are students, and for reference by anybody, such works as *The Secret Doctrine* are indispensable.

The proper subjects for branch discussion turn upon the object of the discussion. Now, that is two-fold: intellectual improvement and spiritual improvement. As we have seen, some of the former is necessary to the latter; but, as also we have seen, it is not usually very great. Hence the range of fact and law need not generally be very wide, most branches being largely composed of members still in the early stages of Theosophical progress. What they need is a very firm rooting in elementary doctrine, that doctrine to be explicitly stated, abundantly proved, and copiously illustrated. It draws after it many important questions in practical life and duty, some of which confront men and women daily, and an intelligent resolution of these is a great contribution to personal needs. Moreover, one most valuable function of branch meet-

ings is the making clear to visitors the fundamental propositions of Theosophy, a sound branch being really a center for diffusing truth through a community. Recondite subjects or learned treatment would do no good to strangers, nor would the strangers long continue to attend. Something of interest to visitors unfamiliar with Theosophy must be furnished, or a branch will not grow. And this fact endorses the admirable plan of some branches whereby an elementary paper or address, intended specifically for outsiders, is an invariable part of the proceedings.

All branches are not, however, on the same level of attainment, and it would not be fair that the advanced ones should be held back to the perpetual treatment of topics which they have progressed beyond or largely exhausted. Culture has its rights as well as ignorance, and it is no small contribution to the T. S. where a group of students are able to discuss the deeper things of Theosophy. Sometimes a paper read thereat can be valuably used in our magazines. Why, then, should not a capable branch take up subjects fit for its capability?

The true principle, therefore, would seem to be that practical topics are the most important, that their basis in doctrine should be clearly laid bare, that all branches should furnish elementary instruction for visitors, that all should seek subjects adapted to their particular intellectual development, and that no precise rule can be given for the class of subjects or for the proposition in which several classes should be mixed.

M. A. W.—The Theosophical Society is composed of students of Theosophy not of reformers. Theosophy translated reads "God Wisdom" and "God Wisdom" includes all that is—the Cosmos as well as the Microcosmos; Nature and Man—not only as known in this life of Sense-Consciousness but in the larger life of super-sense consciousness; a life not limited to the horizon of the material world, nor even of the intellectual world, but extending far beyond, bringing into view spheres within spheres. And it is through the knowledge of his seven-fold being, his genesis, his destiny, and his relation to the cosmos that man attains his completeness. This knowledge can only be attained through the study and exposition of just such books as Esoteric Buddhism, Secret Doctrine, etc., etc.

As a rule it is to get a glimpse of the ideas contained in such

works that people come to Theosophical meetings. Therefore, such studies should be commended. Without speculation we should never learn to look inward, nor to look beyond to those heights of progress that man must reach ere he can be perfected.

Theosophy cannot dictate any special way of working, for each one must follow his own special bent; and every bent, every method is needed; some reach one class, some another.

The abstruse, the speculative, the mystical are as useful as the so-called practical. In fact, without the speculative and the mystical there would be no practical. Progress is glimpsed by the visionary, poetized by the idealist, worked out by the speculative student long before it can become an element in daily life. So it is with Theosophy. Therefore, each one should work according to his talent, giving of his gift. Theosophy attracts by its profound science, its vast knowledge of hidden things, just as much if not more, than by its practical application to daily life; it is well, then, to present all its aspects to the world, that each one may find that which he needs.

QUESTION CCCXLVII.

What real good does a person get by reading about the Astral World and such subjects? Some people are understood to be really harmed.

A. F.—All fact has inherent value as truth, for truth is and ever must be essentially good and wholesome. There can be no merit in ignorance, much less in falsity, and the progress of the world and of individuals is only possible as right conceptions displace erroneous ones, and as knowledge furnishes the material for correct motive and method. So long as mistake or ignorance prevents from just perception of fact, so long must men wander, and blunder, and waste strength.

But it does not follow that every department of fact, and every content of each department, is suitable for every mind. Very clearly, a mind can healthfully digest only that food which is congruous with the stage it has reached in evolution. Beef is considered the most nutritious of meats, yet it would be unfit for an infant and out of place in certain conditions of health. Minds receive knowledge of different kinds and through different media.

according to their degree of development. Children learn moral lessons through fairy tales, and abstract truths through object-teachings in kindergartens. The young and the untrained are not given advanced works on any topic, but simple works in elementary terms, selected partly with reference to the mental stage of the learners, partly with reference to the practical results which alone could make them useful. Higher students have broader range, their enlarged faculties enabling them to comprehend more recondite truth, and their mental discipline making possible a utilization of it in its general bearings and applications; and on the lofty plateaus of richly cultivated intellect, every fresh field is of value, both because of its contents and because of the interaction such have throughout the whole domain of faculty.

The fitness of a topic to any reader depends, therefore, partly upon his ability to understand it, partly upon its congruity with his existing information, his discernment of its relation to other topics, his disposition to fuse it healthfully into his permanent mental structure. The fitness is not absolute; it is relative to the individual. What is excellent for a mind of one grade would be worthless or harmful to a mind of another. A student of chemistry studies and experiments from a work upon poisons; to another person this might be dangerous or even suggestive to crime. A psychologist needs to understand hypnotism; not so an ordinary reader or even one untrained in thought.

Applying these principles to the matter of the Astral Plane, it is evident that no one can understand the complex constitution of man, the method of his formation, the forces operating upon him from unseen spheres, the laws regulating his evolution, the dangers in rash or ignorant experiment, the facts in spiritualistic and hypnotic phenomena, the importance of mental habit in moulding future incarnation,—in short, the whole round of *scientific* truth respecting man as a being developing through a series of connected fleshly embodiments, unless he knows the nature and contents and influences of the zone which lies between and joins the material and the spiritual zones; but as all this knowledge would be useless to one who could not apprehend it, and misleading to one who was unprepared for it, such study would in either case be out of place. A person ignorant of Theosophy or just beginning it, a

person callous to the spiritual philosophy or considering Theosophy as a mere curious speculation or interested in psychism purely as a means to power, a person foolish, or undisciplined, or indiscriminating, or rash, or immature, need not and should not read of the Astral World. He could not be benefited, and might be harmed. To some one of these classes doubtless belonged the readers referred to by the questioner.

But the case is far different when a sincere student desires to understand his own nature and how to train it aright. To him all facts are essential, and he can no more dispense with astral facts than with physical facts. He gets "real good" from these truths, not only because all truth is nutritious to a prepared mind, but because these particular truths help him to perceive and tread the path which is to lead him finally to the gateway of emancipation.

M. A. W.—The study of good works on this subject, works that give knowledge based upon actual experience tested by experiment and reason can never harm anyone, for such study dispels illusion and prepares the student for the dangers lurking in this strange realm of the Astral that is daily becoming more tangible to human consciousness. It is never well to ignore facts or to prefer ignorance to knowledge.

NOTICE.

Questions to be Dealt With in the Next and Subsequent Issues of the "Forum."

Answers should be sent in as soon as possible.

1. *H. P. B. advises members of the T. S. to have no money transactions with fellow-members, as money transactions between people tend in some cases to produce ill-feeling; but when circumstances compel one to have such, should fellowship in the T. S. prejudice one's action and deprive one of a liberty elsewhere allowed?*

2. *Do you not think that instead of attacking and condemning what seems to us illogical or ridiculous in the beliefs of others, we had better look at the truth in such beliefs, condoning or ignoring what seems to us otherwise? I refer, in particular, to the bitterness of spirit shown by many F. T. S. towards Spiritualists and Spiritualism, both in condemnation and ridicule, while Spiritualists have for the most part abstained from discussing Theosophy in their magazines, except those beliefs which are rational and acceptable to common sense investigators.*

T. S. ECHOES.

Executive Notice, T. S.

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE, LONDON,

9th July, 1896.

The undersigned hereby publishes, for the information of the members of the society, the text of the rules as revised and adopted by the General Council at its meeting this day.

The following members were present, viz: the president, the vice-president, the general secretaries of the European and Indian Sections, Mr. C. W. Leadbeater, as proxy (under specific instructions) for the general secretary of the Scandinavian Section, and Mrs. Annie Besant, as proxy for the general secretary of the American Section. The Australasian Section's views were represented in the official report of the general secretary, and the New Zealand Section had been so recently chartered that it had not had time to submit its wishes for the consideration of the General Council. Every change suggested by any section and general secretary was carefully considered in the light of its bearing upon the peculiar circumstances of the whole society, and in several instances the members of the Council yielded their own preferences to the apparent wish of the majority. When several amendments touched the same clause, the various improvements were incorporated in the form finally adopted. Only one important recommendation was rejected, that for removing the president and vice-president of the society for cause shewn. On mature consideration it was decided that no rule could be of use if such an emergency arose. If a majority, or even a strong minority, desired to dispossess one of these officers while he retained the confidence of a large number of members, a split in the society would result, let the rule be what it might. It was therefore thought better to leave the society free, under the powers vested in the General Council, to deal with any serious case if unfavorable circumstances should arise.

The undersigned takes this opportunity of correcting the mistaken idea, which prevails in some quarters, that the T. S. Rules and the wording of its "Declared Objects" are substantially what they have been from the commencement, and therefore entitled to some special immunity from change. So far is this from true, that the objects have been restated and the rules altered several times, as the growth of the society and its altered conditions rendered the same necessary. The version now adopted is, apparently, the best and most comprehensive that we have had for years, and in the expression of the "Objects" the line traced out in the minds of the founders is strictly followed. The form given to the second object.

has been adopted to meet an almost general view that *all* religions, etc., deserved study as being based on the same general principles. In this, in her *Isis Unveiled*, Madam Blavatsky led the way which is now traced out for all future students of Theosophy and sympathizers with our work.

The Revised Rules go into force at once, but the undersigned will use his discretionary powers so as to meet the reasonable wishes of all of his colleagues with respect to details not specifically herein covered.

H. S. OLCOTT,
President Theosophical Society.

108 E. 17th STREET, NEW YORK CITY,
July 20th, 1896.

To the Editor of Mercury:

The executive committee having empowered the general secretary to remit to the Gen. Sec'y European Section the sum of \$50 as a contribution towards the expense of supplying the American Section with the *Vahan*, a most cordial letter has been received from Mr. E. W. Leadbeater, Ass't Sec'y, desiring that most hearty thanks and appreciation for this help be conveyed to the section.

As will be seen from the enclosed letter from President Olcott, the new Rules of the T. S. are now adopted and officially promulgated. As soon as possible they will be printed in pamphlet form, together with the amended constitution of the American Section, and the pamphlet made accessible to American F. T. S.

On July 15th, a charter was issued to the Unity Lodge T. S., Pasadena, Cal., with eight charter members. There are now sixteen branches in the American Section. Mr. Frank T. Merritt is the president of this new branch, and the secretary is Miss Laura B. Packard, 42 E. Walnut Street.

At the recent meeting of the convention of the European Section, the following resolution, proposed by Mrs. Isabel C. Oakley and seconded by Mr. Oliver Firth, was carried unanimously:—

"Resolved, That this 6th Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society in Europe sends fraternal greeting to its brother section in America, and wishes it all success in its arduous work of spreading the truths of Theosophy among the American People."

ALEXANDER FULLERTON,
General Secretary.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., JULY 30, 1896.—Golden Gate Lodge T. S. has had a busy month. First, there was engaging, furnishing, and opening of headquarters, which opening occurred on the first day of the month, with a few appropriate speeches and many happy hearts. On the second Wednes-

day of the month a social evening was spent, when everybody tried to get acquainted with everybody else, and one or two short stories and recitations were given. This social evening, by the way, has been instituted as a monthly occurrence, in future to take place on the first Wednesday of the month. On the third week a systematic course of study was commenced, on this order: a number of questions were written and distributed to members to be answered the following week. The subject under treatment was the conception of Deity as contained in all known religions, taking them separately. This brought out a number of interesting and comprehensive replies the following week, being continued into the fifth and last meeting of the month. The attendance throughout has been very good.

The Sunday evening public lectures have been very successful in sustaining the interest aroused by the Countess. The number and character of the questions asked after each lecture show that Theosophy has fallen on good ground, and the seed must produce a fine harvest in the near future.

J. B.

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA, *July 10, 1896.*

To the Editor of Mercury:—For several years there have been a few earnest students of Theosophy in Pasadena; not necessarily enrolled members of the society, but who, nevertheless, devoted occasional evenings to class study, and friendly discussion of Theosophic topics at the homes of the students. The text books were the Besant manuals, supplemented by "Light on the Path," and others, for devotional readings, with access to a good library for wider scope. The majority interested seemed not to care for branch rules and regulations, preferring to meet informally and when suited to their purpose. Good progress was made in this quiet way, visitors came and went; those ready for the teachings accepted them, and realizing their worth entered the T. S.

The coming of the Countess Wachtmeister lent fresh interest, gave an added impulse to the movement, and on June 21st, we met for branch organization with eight signatures to application for charter.

By unanimous voice Frank Tracy Merritt was elected president, Laura Belle Packard, secretary, and Mrs. Sarah E. Merritt treasurer of the association. Propositions for a name were then in order, and after discussing several Sanskrit proper nouns, by general consent that of UNITY LODGE was adopted. The by-laws governing this small body are few and explicit.

Early in the autumn we expect to have a more public place for meeting, when an H. P. B. training class will be started and occasional open meetings held.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON.—The Ananda Lodge, eight members, was formed early in July with the assistance of Countess Wachtmeister. Mr. Barnes, the president, writes: "Our first meeting was held on Sunday, July 12th, and on that occasion we had the pleasure of listening to a very interesting discourse by Count Axel Wachtmeister on Meditation as practiced by the natives of India. The meeting was well attended, and proved quite successful.

"I may say that we do not as yet feel ourselves strong enough to hold public meetings regularly, but we trust that the time is not far distant when we may be able to do so.

"We hope to see the American Section built up again to more than its previous strength and activity."

SANTA CRUZ has a branch of ten members. Full particulars will be given next month.

BOOK REVIEWS.

THEOSOPHIST for June.—"Old Diary Leaves" gives a graphic account of the early work in Ceylon. Every installment of "Diary Leaves" makes one wish for the day when this great work will appear in book form. The "Rajput Wedding," also by the Colonel, is a fascinating page from Hindoo life.

The other articles are "Sri Ramanuja's Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita," "Sanskrit Grammar," "Planetary Chain" (concluded), by Miss Lilian Edger, and "Silpa Sastra," which gives rules for choosing grounds for building purposes, also plans for villages, etc; all these matters being regulated by religious ceremonial.

"THEOSOPHY IN AUSTRALASIA" and "SEEN and the UNSEEN" gives news of the lecturing tour of Mr. Staples, the general secretary, through Queensland. Two new branches have been formed, and all branches are showing great activity. "Seen and Unseen" says, "The T. S. are now located in splendid quarters on Elizabeth Street (Brisbane), and are vigorously carrying on the work of public propaganda of Theosophy and its teachings."

Mr. Staples leaves for England about the middle of August.

LUCIFER for July.—"On the Watch Tower" tells of the European convention and disposes of the claims made by some persons that they are in communication with H. P. B., one even assuming that H. P. B. has incarnated in her. From Mr. Sinnett we learn that it is possible now to manufacture from raw inorganic elements organic substances which in

combinations among themselves in turn become the vehicles in which Nature engenders life. "Buddhism, Christianity, and Phallicism," is a posthumous article of H. P. B. "Lives of the Later Platonists" and "Devachan" are continued. "The Spirit of the Age," by Mr. Fullerton, and "Sufism," by Otway Cuffe, are concluded. "The Unity Underlying all Religions," by Mrs Besant, begun in this number, supplies a want long felt; it will be most useful in propaganda.

"Animal Reincarnation," by Bertram Keightley, answers many difficult questions and will interest all readers. "The Helping of the People," by Ivy Hooper, is an appeal to the F. T. S. worker to speak Theosophic truths in the language of the people and in the forms to which the people have been accustomed.

THE VAHAN for July.—Mr. Meade quotes from Plutarch to show that the Oriental ideas of illusion and reality were held by the Greeks. A question on the "elemental essence" mentioned in the "Astral Plane," and one, "Is the *Path* a path of woe?" brings out admirable answers from such authorities as Bertram Keightley, C. W. Leadbeater, and Mrs. Besant.

THE LOTUS BLEU for June continues "Secret Doctrine," and "Karma" by Annie Besant. "Theosophic Glossary," and "Mandukya Upanishad," are concluded, as is also "Human Nature" by Guymoit. This writer says, "No religion has ever shown that the goal of human life is that perfected condition known to Theosophy as adeptship, because no religion has ever proclaimed the rational aim and end of this life." "Materialist and Theosophist," 5th letter, treats of the differentiation of the many from the one, especially in regard to man, and the why and wherefore of this differentiation.

"Le Vide" gives many hints in regard to the "Silence." "Occult Varieties" gives the conclusion of an interesting story of the punishment of Sacrilege.

RAYS OF LIGHT.—Colombo Mona Caird writes against vivisection. "If," she says, "the deed of cruelty is done with our sanction, or without our protest, in some form or another, the burden of guilt must be ours, and some day we and our race will have to pay the penalty."

"Notes by the way" recommends the Buisson or vapor bath as a cure for hydrophobia.

BRAHMAVADIN, June 6, 20.—"Religion and Revelation," and "The Religion of Humanity," form the theme of the editorials. "Bhakti Yoga" by Vivekananda and "Brahma," a dialogue between a European scholar and a Pandit, are carried through the two numbers and concluded in the last.

MERCURY.

THE ARYA BALA BODHINI for June contains "What makes an Ascetic?" "A Dialogue," "A True Indian Story," "Mrs. Annie Besant as a Woman and a Lecturer," "Cured by Faith," "Universal Religion," and "An Appeal to the Hindu Community." "Notes and Comments" is full of interesting matter.

NOTES AND QUERIES for August gives valuable notes on the word "Christos—Christ," "The Aboriginal Calendar," and "In How Far are the Samites, Semites?" by Prof. Abel of Berlin, are very learned and interesting articles.

THE ANTAHKARANA bids farewell to its readers. This paper will be merged into the "Sophia" published at Madrid.

AWAKENED INDIA, published monthly at Madras. The first number of this new enterprise is received. *Awakened India* is essentially a popular paper. It aims to teach the great principles of the Vedanta philosophy by means of stories, whereas the *Brahmavadin* addresses itself to the student, the philosopher. *Awakened India* appeals to every one. The western reader will find in its pages the life side of Brahmanism. This number contains "Ourselves," editorial, "The Story of Nachiketa," "Elements of the Vedanta," "Nanada, the Pariah Saint," "Doing Good to the World," by Vivekananda, "Buddha, the Ideal Karma Yogi?" "Thoughts on Bhagavad Gita," "True Greatness"—a novel. We wish the paper God-speed: may it achieve its great purpose.

RECEIVED.—*The Thinker*, Madras, *Theosophic Gleaner*, Bombay, *Prasnottara*, Benares, *Theosophy in Australasia*, *The Seen and the Unseen*, Brisbane, *Exodus*, New York, *Temple of Health*, San Diego, *Maha-Bodhi Journal*, Calcutta. *Orpheus* by G. R. S. Meade, will be reviewed in September issue.

EASTERN SCHOOL OF THEOSOPHY.

H. P. B. established in 1888 an Esoteric Section of the T. S. for the fuller instruction of earnest students. She changed the name of this into the Eastern School of Theosophy. Any member of the Theosophical Society who desires information as to the conditions of admission must apply to Alex. Fullerton, Esq., Gen. Sec. of the American Section T. S., 108 East 17th Street, New York City, who has kindly consented to act as representative in America.

ANNIE BESANT,
Head of the E. S.

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

[This Department will be devoted exclusively to children ; questions and answers from Lotus Circles on Theosophical Subjects are invited and will receive special attention.]

SCIENCE FOR LITTLE CHILDREN.

I WISH to call the attention of parents and teachers to the value of science lessons as a means of intellectual and moral development, and on this account advocate its introduction at Lotus Circles.

Elementary science has this advantage over most other subjects of tuition introduced at children's gatherings for instruction, that it seems to combine the possibility of many others and forms a background for all other instruction. Added to this it is *facts* not *theories* that it deals with. Now with theories on the moral, philosophical or theological aspect of life and life's duties there is always the possibility that the children are often in close contact with people who hold opposite views to those we wish our children to understand, and too often those holding these opposite views feel it their bounden duty to undermine our work, thus bringing a sense of confusion into the children's minds, or what is much more detrimental to them morally, setting them, before their minds are mature, to compare the beliefs of those they love and ought to be able to reverence. The latter is a difficulty we cannot altogether overcome, but we can minimize it. It is harmful for a boy to find that two persons whom he has been taught to look up to have opposite moral codes. He comes to think either one is wrong or perhaps both are wrong, and "what's the use of minding what they think right," or "perhaps everybody's wrong and it doesn't much matter." Some of our adult friends have never got beyond this mental stage. Now, when we take natural science for our ground, work we are dealing with incontrovertible facts, and facts which clearly and unmistakably illustrate the teachings of Theosophy. They lend themselves to moral deductions, and Karma, the law of cause and effect, runs all through natural history.

The initial difficulty that will present itself to teachers will be: how can we teach that which we do not know ourselves? A difficulty easily overcome. Children's minds can take in so little at a time that if care is taken that no new fact is presented to their

growing minds until they have understood and learned to apply what has already been given to them, a teacher or parent with limited leisure, yet desirous to try this plan can, from a primer, easily obtain enough information to keep far ahead of her class, and the specimens—a very essential part of the equipment—can readily be obtained in our own flower gardens, or in walks in the neighborhood. Children always delight in their lessons, and may be seen applying their knowledge and carrying out their investigations in their play. This tendency in children is a material help to teachers, and should be encouraged and every inducement given to them to find their own specimens. The knowledge thus gained becomes their own conscious possession, an ownership which all intelligent children enjoy, a very different thing to the knowledge which we insert and graft into their minds. One other advantage this system of teaching has over all others is that children apparently of duller brains than their brothers can often be stimulated to mental activity, because natural history is something which comes into their every day life, and meets them at every turn, in the garden, the woods, the fields, on the roadside. He is a very dull boy, indeed, whose attention does not wander about him as he trudges along to the, to him, unloved schoolroom. Natural science provides us with a means of utilizing even the wandering attention—the bane of school life. But not only this. It creates an interest in the life around him. Instead of crushing the beetle for the mere wanton pleasure the sense of power and tyranny gives him, he will trace it in its movements, find its source of food, and when he is entrusted with a hand magnifying glass will study its parts in detail. The bird is no longer a target for pea-rifle or shanghi but a living thing that feels pleasure and pain. The parent of the little birdlets, whose food he can watch it gathering, whose soft nest-home has been built with infinite skill and care, too beautiful to be robbed, torn and thrown to the ground. The flowers are known as the food plants of bees and ants, and varicolored butterflies. Plants, with their infinite variety of colours, texture, leafage, are never ending sources of interest. There is the shape of blossom and leaf, the number in its parts, the grouping of plants into families by their likenesses or their separation into classes by their differences, and here again the magnifying glass

is an added pleasure. The old stump of the tree cut down years ago is no longer only a stump, but a record of the tree's age. The soft growth at its foot is no longer only a toad-stool, but a center of life, force and procreative power. The seed found by the road, side is picked up, planted, and tended and its growth watched with tender care from the time its first pair of nursing leaves appear above the soil. When a little older the stones and boulders will come within range of his knowledge and interest, and still later physiology and chemistry, with their marvelous revelations open up a new world of beauty, and form strong counter attractions to the billiard saloons and other dangers from which we would fain hold back our lads, but will always fail so long as their leisure hours lack interest and occupation.

For the purpose of Lotus Circles I would recommend the study of botany, insects, crystals, birds and birds' eggs, and with the older children the first principles of mechanics. There will be certain objections to the study of insects and eggs; but after careful thought I have come to the conclusion that in the end it will be gain if we, by this means, inculcate a love of animate nature. Boys, especially, have a strong destructive tendency. We cannot eradicate it, but we can utilize it and thus curb it. If at the outset we lay down the strict rule that insects are to be caught only as specimens and that two specimens, male and female, suffice, that life must be taken quickly and painlessly by the cyanide bottle; that a bird must not ruthlessly be robbed of her nest and eggs, but that out of a clutch one may be gently abstracted and the nest obtained when the bird has finished with it our end will be gained and our purpose served, and a respect engendered for the rights of others, even if the others be only birds or insects. Among the chief advantages of science as a medium of training is that it necessitates careful, correct observation. This leads to careful and truthful thought, and truthfulness of diction must follow as effect to cause. Inaccuracy or exaggeration are readily checked, and soon appear ridiculous even to children. This habit of truthfulness of thought becomes a trait of character worth much effort to attain. The observing powers are developed systematically, and reflection follows as a natural consequence. System and method become the order of study, unless the teacher is herself careless. Indeed, many of our Lotus Circle teachers, after adopting this plan, may find that they have themselves gained something as well as added knowledge.

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